

The Expected Christ

Text: 1 Chron. 17:11-14; Deut. 18:15-18; Gen. 3:15

By Pastor Trent Boedicker

Have you ever had an unexpected visitor? There is a knock at the front door. You open up to see who it could be and you're greeted by a man and woman. There is something vaguely familiar about their smiling faces, and it takes a moment to recognize them. "Surprise!" they say. It certainly is. When you hear their voice you instantly realize who they are: old friends from high school. They look so different than you remember. You haven't seen each other for twenty years. It was at a class reunion, years ago. You agreed to stay in touch, but of course life has a way of taking us in different directions. It is so wonderful to see them. What a pleasant surprise. You invite them in, and talk for hours catching up and reminiscing on the good old days. You didn't expect them to show up at your front door, but are so glad they did.

There are a lot of things that happen in our lives that are unexpected. Just think about the events of this week. I don't think any of us imagined that we would be dealing with the challenges our world is facing today. But it is comforting to remember that nothing is unexpected for the Lord. He sees all the struggles that we face. He is aware of our needs. He understands what tomorrow will bring, and the next day, and the day after that.

We see that demonstrated in the coming of Christ. When Jesus entered this world 2,000 years ago it wasn't something that happened out of nowhere. God knew before the beginning of time that he would send his Son to earth to redeem us. All throughout the OT there are hundreds of prophecies pointing to the life and ministry of Christ. There are verses that tell us where he would be born, and the miraculous conception that would take place. There are predictions that speak of his miracles and compassion for others. There are passages that describe his betrayal and arrest. There are even prophecies that speak of his death, burial, and resurrection. Some of those predictions are vague, others are incredibly specific, but every book of the Bible in some way points to Christ. He is at the very center of Scripture. It is all about him.

That's why so many people were expecting the Messiah when the NT opens. The crowds who went out to see Jesus were constantly asking, "Could this be the one the prophets spoke of?" "Is he the one we've been waiting for?" Some of them struggled to recognize him for who he truly is. Others believed, and became his disciples. They didn't yet see how all the pieces fit together, but after he rose from the grave Jesus opened their minds to understand all that was written about him in the Scriptures, how the Law and the Prophets, and the Psalms all pointed to him.

We're going to look at just a few of those passages this morning that predict the coming of Christ. The OT not only tells us that a Messiah would come, but it tells us about his mission and the work he would accomplish for us.

The OT predicted the coming of a great King

Turn with me to 1 Chronicles 17. These are words that were spoken to David, after he had become king over all Israel. David wanted very much to build a temple for the Lord. It was a noble desire, but God told David he wasn't the person to accomplish this. Even still, God made a covenant with David in 1 Chronicles 17:11-15 telling him,

¹¹ "When your days are fulfilled that you must go to be with your fathers, that I will set up one of your descendants after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. ¹² "He shall build for Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. ¹³ "I will be his father and he shall be My son; and I will not take My lovingkindness away from him, as I took it from him who was before you. ¹⁴ "But I will settle him in My house and in My kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever." ' ' ¹⁵ According to all these words and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.

David's reign took place about 1,000 years before Christ, and he would become Israel's greatest king. He was able to lead the people in victory over their enemies, bringing peace and prosperity to the land. Things were rough at first, but he was able to bring a sense of unity across the twelve tribes. He made Jerusalem the capital of the nation and built a palace in the city. One day he told himself, it isn't right for me to live a fancy palace while the ark of the Lord is housed in a tent. So he prayed about it, and this was the Lord's response. David would not be the one to build a house for the Lord, this was something his son Solomon would do, but the Lord would establish David's house. One day, long after David passed away, a king would come from his line.

God promised he would establish an *unshakable kingdom*. Unlike the empires of the world that rise and fall, over the course of history, his kingdom will stand forever. It will be a kingdom of peace reaching beyond the borders of Israel to the entire earth. The kingdom that God built through David was impressive, but the kingdom he would build through this future king would be unlike anything this world has ever seen.

God promised he would give him an *unending dynasty*. This was a concern for many kings in the ancient world. They wanted to know there was heir, who would take their place one day. When it was time to pass the crown to another, the king hoped the nation would continue to flourish under the rule of his son. It was not uncommon, during that period of history, for conspirators to rise up and murder the royal family so they could seize power. The dynasty might continue for a couple of generations but end just like that. David was told that his line would never end.

God promised to give this future king an *unrivaled throne*. There would be no other power or force in the universe to compare with him. No enemy would stand against him. No rival would be able to take his throne.

D. When we come to the gospels we find the fulfillment of these promises in Jesus. He is the Son of David, the rightful heir. He is not only the king of the Jews but the King of kings and

Lord of lords who rule over all the earth. When the NT opens the people of Israel were desperate for the Messianic King, because there were so many ways that they felt helpless before the powers of this earth. There was so much uncertainty in life, they were looking for someone who could bring peace and security in the midst of the chaos.

In many ways we can identify with them. In a world filled with trouble, it is comforting to know that no matter what happens Christ is King. He is sovereign over all the earth. There is no power that can stand against him and no army that can overthrow his kingdom. Today he is seated at the right hand of his Father on high, but he is always with you and me bringing peace to our everyday lives. May we bow our hearts before him and serve him with our lives.

No leader has ever remained in power forever. I saw an article this week about Queen Elizabeth, who recently became the 4th longest serving monarch in world history. She already achieved the honor of being the longest reigning monarch in British history, back in 2015. But now she has reached another milestone, surpassing all but 3 leaders in world history in the length of her reign. She was only 25 years old when she first received the crown, but now she reigned for 68 years.

That is impressive, but Scripture tells us that the reign of Christ will have no end. **Revelation 11:15** (NASB95) declares, *“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.”* And 1 Peter 5:11 (AV) tells us, *“To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”*

The OT predicted the coming of a great Prophet

Turn to Deuteronomy 18:15-18. We’re going back even further in history to the days of Moses. David lived about 1000 years before Christ, but Moses lived about 400 years before David. He was also one of the greatest leaders in the OT. Moses led the people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt. He guided them through the desert towards the Promised Land. Towards the end of his life he delivered a series of speeches to prepare them before they took possession of the land. In Dt. 18:15-18 (NASB) he says,

¹⁵ *“The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.”* ¹⁶ *“This is according to all that you asked of the Lord your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, or I will die.’”* ¹⁷ *“The Lord said to me, ‘They have spoken well.’”* ¹⁸ *‘I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.’”*

Moses knew that the end of his life was approaching. It had been more than forty years since the Lord brought them out of Egypt. Because of their lack of faith and disobedience the Israelites wandered the desert until that generation passed away. Now a new generation took their place. They had reached the edge of the Promised Land, and were preparing to enter. Moses instructed them not to make the same mistake as their fathers, but to follow the Lord. He had been there, all this time, guiding them, teaching them how to live, speaking on behalf of

God. That's what a prophet does. He is a spokesman, who delivers God's message to his people.

Early on, when the people camped at Mt. Sinai, they saw smoke descend on the mountain and they heard the voice of the Lord thunder from above. They were terrified, and begged the Lord not to speak to them directly, but to speak through his prophet. And he agreed. Moses enjoyed a special relationship with the Lord. He climbed to the top of the mountain, and experienced God's presence. He heard the voice of the Lord calling out to him. He received the commands of God, and carried the tablets of stone. In a sense, he stood in between God and the people.

Moses was Israel's greatest prophet, but many others would follow after him from Samuel, to Elijah, to Isaiah, to Jeremiah. We often associate their ministry with declaring future events. Sometimes God gave them a glimpse into what would happen, but most of the time they addressed the situation of their day. They delivered God's message and called the people to repentance when they strayed. Their ministries were often accompanied by miracles, which God performed through them, to authenticate their ministry. They did not speak on their own behalf, but there are several places where God tells them he was putting his words in their mouth.

But in this passage Moses predicted that one day an even greater prophet would come. The people of Israel remembered that promise. There was a gap of about 400 years between the Old and New Testament, which is often referred to as a period of silence because the Lord had not spoken to his people during that time as he had in the past. It may have seemed like the days of the prophets had ended, but they were yearning to hear a message from God once again. As John the Baptist preached in the wilderness of Judea the people asked him, "Are you the prophet," and he told them, "no, I'm not the one." He was preparing the way for Jesus.

I've been to a number of conferences and often before the main speaker steps up to the podium to deliver the message someone comes up first to introduce him. That person tells you a little bit about the background of the speaker, what they're going to talk about, maybe explain the theme of the conference and why this speaker was chosen. You don't get up and leave after the introduction. This isn't the person you've come to hear. You came to hear the one who steps up the podium after him. John the Baptist tried to tell the people he wasn't the one they needed to hear. He was only making introductions. Jesus was the one who would come after him.

The same was true for all the prophets. As powerful and amazing as their ministries were, they were only preparing the way for Jesus, and their message pointed to him.

When Jesus began his ministry the crowds were amazed by his words and works. He was not like their religious teachers, but spoke with authority. In John 6:14 (NIV84) they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world."

Jesus enjoyed a special relationship with God the Father unlike anyone who had come before him. He not only spent time in God's presence, but came from God's presence in heaven. The prophets spoke God's truth but Jesus is the truth. What they predicted he fulfilled. Moses was given a glimpse of God's glory, but Jesus shares in the fullness of that glory. The prophets

announced the salvation of God, but Jesus provided salvation through his life, and death and resurrection. Moses instructed the people to listen to God's prophet. And we are called to listen to the good news of Jesus Christ.

The OT predicted the coming of a great Savior

Go back to Genesis 3:15. We're moving even further back in history, to the first man and woman. God created humanity and placed them in the garden, where they enjoyed perfect fellowship with him. But unfortunately, it did not last for long. They chose to disobey his command, and sin entered their hearts bringing ruin to all of creation. But even here, as the curse fell upon the world, there was a glimmer of hope. In Genesis 3:15 God turned to the serpent who tempted Eve and said,

"I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."

This doesn't sound like much, but it is the very first promise of a Savior. When Adam and Eve heard the voice of God, calling out to them in the garden they were afraid because they knew they were guilty before him and deserved his judgment. Rather than obey the word of the Lord, they chose to listen to the devil. He filled their heart with desire, promising they would be like God knowing good and evil. All they had to do was reach out and take one bite, and so they did. He deceived them, but they were still accountable for their actions. The moment they disobeyed God, sin infected their heart, and began coursing through their veins.

The world would never be the same after that moment. Fellowship with God was broken. Nature was thrown into chaos. The process of death began working in the cells of all living things. Paradise was lost. If left to ourselves, there would be no hope. But God has not left us on our own.

The verse doesn't say much, but it anticipates the conflict that would unfold through the ages between the devil and humanity. He continues to lead men and women astray with deception and empty promises. But even though it might seem like darkness has gripped the world, God will ultimately prevail. The Lord speaks of a child that will be born of woman one day, and tells the serpent, "He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel."

I've never been bitten by a snake, but I can imagine it must be painful. I've seen nature shows on the discovery channel where they play the scene slow motion. An unsuspecting animal is grazing in the field, oblivious to the serpent hiding in the weeds. It watches and waits, before lunging at its victim, striking with razor sharp fangs.

That's the picture the verses present, only the serpent is not victorious. It would strike the woman's offspring, but he would crush its head. This is the very first prediction of a deliverer. It speaks of the ministry of Christ. He entered this world, born of a woman. Satan struck at him with the fury of hell, as Christ underwent terrible suffering in his crucifixion, but through his resurrection he triumphed crushing the powers of sin and death. God would take it upon himself

to save us. Sin and death spread to the entire human race through Adam. But redemption and life flows to us through Christ, for all who receive him by faith.

One author explains,

Jesus was fully obedient to the Father, and is the source of life, triumphing over Satan and death... [This is] the very first announcement of his redemptive design for a messianic deliverer, a descendant of the woman whom Satan has deceived—a Seed who will ultimately overcome Satan and his influence (Gen. 3:15). This gracious promise becomes an organizing theme for the rest of Scripture and the rest of human history, as every event finds its place in relation to the great battle that now unfolds between the conquering Seed of the woman and the resistance of Satan.ⁱ

Conclusion –

The coming of Christ was expected. God announced it ahead of time, all the way back in the garden when he promised a deliverer, and again at the edge of the Promised Land when he spoke of a prophet greater than Moses, and again in the palace of Jerusalem when he predicting the coming a king who will reign forever.

Again we're reminded that there are a lot of things in our lives that are unexpected. Things can chance in a moment. Our normal routine can be interrupted by a crisis we never imagined, and that can a frightening thing. In those moments it is comforting to know that there is nothing that surprises the Lord. He sees the end from the beginning, and knows how history will unfold. In the end good will triumph and the forces of darkness will be destroyed. He will reclaim this fallen world and restore it to his perfect design. Even though we might not know what to expect we can rest in the Lord who does. But the question for us today is do you know him? Have you bowed your heart in worship before the King of kings and Lord of lords? Have you listened to his voice responding to the good news he proclaims? Have trusted in the Savior who tasted death for us that we might experience life in him?

He will one day come again. May we live in hope and expectation.

ⁱ VanGemenen, W. (2013). Genesis. In B. Chapell & D. Ortlund (Eds.), *Gospel Transformation Bible: English Standard Version* (pp. 8–9). Wheaton, IL: Crossway.